

Interstate 680

Issue 2, Vol. No. 1
Fall 2000

solutions on sunol

The Alameda County Congestion Management Agency, in partnership with Caltrans, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, is managing Sunol Grade improvements.

Construction Begins on I-680 Auxiliary Lane



Fremont Mayor Gus Morrison, Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty, CTC Member Jim Kellogg, State Senator Liz Figueroa, ACCMA Executive Director Dennis Fay, Caltrans District 4 Director Harry Yahata and Danville Councilmember Millie Greenberg ceremoniously break ground on the I-680 Auxiliary Lane project.

The Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA), along with its partners, broke ground to commemorate the overall kick-off of the I-680 Sunol Grade Project and the construction start of Project I, the Auxiliary Lane. The groundbreaking, held June 16, 2000, marked the official start of the construction of the auxiliary lane between Automall Parkway and Mission Boulevard, South on I-680. The auxiliary lane will reduce the bottleneck that kicks off the Sunol Grade congestion on weekday mornings.

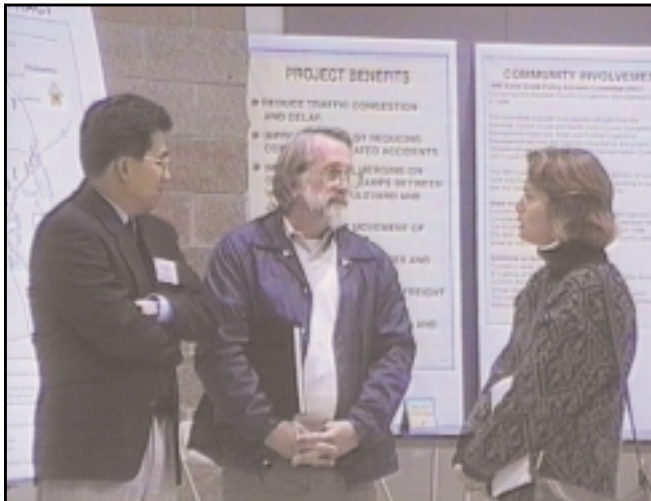
This area is the first domino in the back up that now starts as early as

5:45 a.m. on weekday mornings. In an effort to provide quick relief, ACCMA pushed ahead with the auxiliary lane, designed to provide motorists with more lane distance to transition on and off the freeway. It improves safety and provides for a more smooth transition leading to less back up. Instead of experiencing a dead stop, traffic will move 35-40 miles per hour for 15 miles.

"Everyone involved, from the agencies, elected officials, business community, the contractors and staff, has worked hard to bring quick relief to this area," said Dennis Fay, Executive Director of the ACCMA.

The ACCMA received funding for the project in 1998 and immediately began conducting the appropriate environmental work, completing the design six months ahead of schedule. State and federal transportation officials provided the final funding authorizations in April 2000 allowing construction to begin. ACCMA has contracted with the Alameda County Transportation Authority (ACTA) to manage the auxiliary lane construction activities. ■

Public Learns About the Southbound HOV Lane Project



When will the soundwalls be constructed? Can it happen faster?

We understand residents' concerns about the freeway noise, and are developing a plan to expedite the soundwalls in areas where the existing topography and construction staging lend themselves to quick and efficient completion.

Can you provide a breakdown of the costs of the project?

The project will be completed with a combination of federal, state and local funds.

The breakdown is: \$38 million of state discretionary funds, \$9 million in federal funds, \$15 million in funds from ACCMA, \$22 million from Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, with additional resources being provided by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority.

Will the ramp metering cause problems on local roads?

Studies will be completed before implementation to determine the impact that ramp metering will have on local roads. At that time, ACCMA and Caltrans will work with the local municipalities to implement an effective ramp-metering program. ■

Studies prepared by Caltrans concluded that Project II, the HOV lane, which will be completed within the existing right-of-way, would not have a significant impact on the environment. The completed draft environmental document was released and the public was invited to comment on the document in writing and/or at two public hearings.

Some questions posed by the public included:

Commuters need to get home at the end of the day too. What about Northbound improvements?

Southbound congestion was worse, so we started there. Now that the Southbound project is funded and underway, the coalition's efforts have turned to finding funding for Northbound improvements. In fact, the California State Budget Bill includes \$60 million for the Northbound improvements.

CALTRANS COMPLETES ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW ON PROJECT II HOV LANES WILL BRING RELIEF SOON

While the I-680 Sunol Grade Project has moved through the process very quickly, extra efforts were made to ensure that all environmental issues were rigorously analyzed and appropriately addressed. In fact, Caltrans prepared 11 environmental technical studies for the Project. Because the Project is located primarily within the existing I-680 right-of-way, minimal impact on the environment is expected. The studies concluded the Project does not have significant environmental impacts. However, mitigation measures were recommended in some areas.

Studies addressed:

Air Quality
Natural Environment
Water Quality and Flooding
Archeology and Historical Properties

Seismic & Geotechnical Issues
Paleontology
Socio-economic Conditions
Aesthetics and Visual Impacts

Mitigations included:

Tree Replanting
Soundwalls

Getting More People Over the Grade

Congestion relief has many faces. While the number one choice for people traveling through the Sunol Grade is the single-occupant vehicle, many are choosing alternatives such as carpooling, subscription bus service and the ACE train.

ACCMA has been in the forefront in partnerships to relieve congestion on the Sunol Grade, including providing support for:

THE ALTAMONT COMMUTER EXPRESS (ACE)

The ACE trains have been a tremendous success and new trains are being added to meet the demand. Track-access

rights are currently being negotiated and crewmembers recruited for a late fall 2000 startup for the third ACE train. The schedule for this service will be announced when negotiations are completed.

In addition, equipment has been ordered for the fourth train. Estimated arrival of the equipment is December 2000 or January 2001. Exact start of service and schedule have not yet been determined but will move quickly to accommodate the demands of riders.

For more information on ACE, please call the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission at (209) 468-5600.

PRIME TIME BUS SERVICE

If you live in the Tri-Valley and need to get to work in the Silicon Valley, try Prime Time Bus Service. The bus service has been successful and will be expanding its services over the next nine months. In fact, Prime Time now offers bus services to IBM as well as other major employers. To handle the expanded service, Prime Time has added five new buses to its fleet.

For more information on Prime Time, please call the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA) at (925) 455-7555. ■

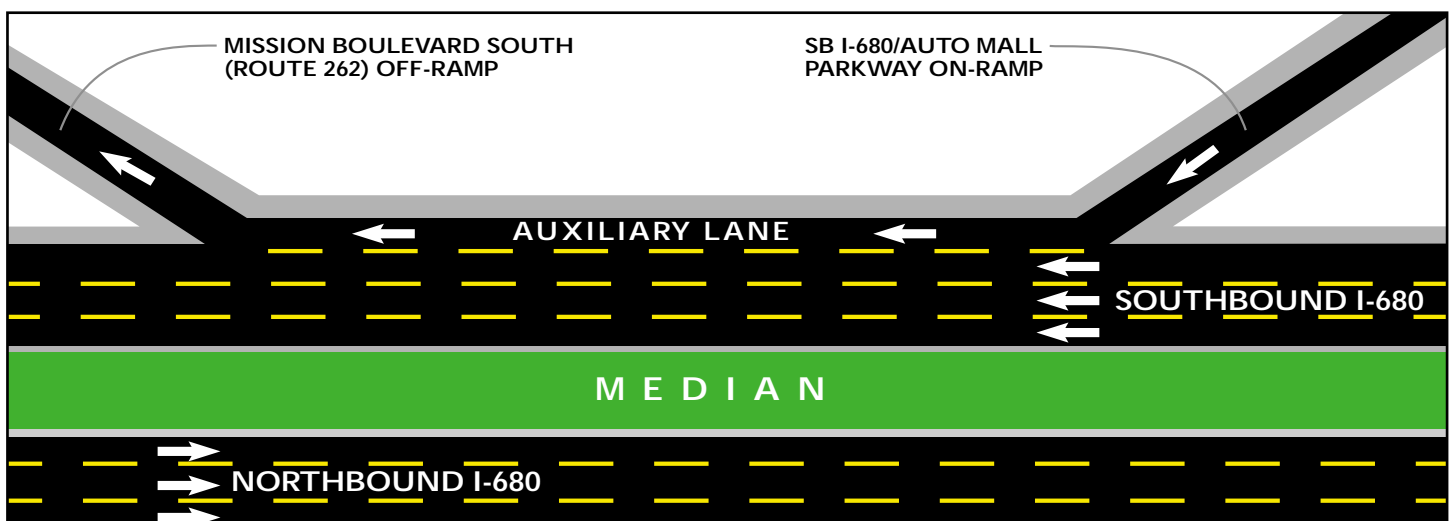
How Will an Auxiliary Lane Improve Traffic?

A major bottleneck occurs on Southbound I-680 as traffic exiting at the Mission Boulevard south off-ramp backs up into I-680. This backup eliminates the use of one of the three freeway lanes for through traffic.

The auxiliary lane that is now under construction will help to reduce this

bottleneck. The auxiliary lane will provide approximately 2,000 feet of additional lane for those commuters that exit at Mission Boulevard South. By keeping these cars off the main three lanes of the freeway, through traffic will not be as affected by exiting vehicles.

Not only will the auxiliary lane improve traffic flow on Southbound I-680, it will also help to enhance safety by reducing the potential for rear-end and sideswipe accidents. ■





WHO IS ACCMA?

The Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA) is the local agency responsible for planning improvements in streets, highways, and mass transit in Alameda County. Its governing board is comprised of elected officials representing all of the local governments and major transit agencies in Alameda County.

For more information about ACCMA, please contact us at:

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Executive Director: Dennis Fay

Unique Partnership Brings Speedy Results

The Sunol Grade improvements are coming at lightning speed according to Bill Gray, of William R. Gray & Company, ACCMA's project expeditor and transportation consultant.

"In my 20 years of working on transportation projects, I have never seen anything move this fast. This diverse group of people, agencies and business interests moved this project from unfunded in 1998 to real relief for the commuter in about two years."

Now that Southbound improvements have entered the construction phase, the SOS coalition and agency partners have turned their efforts to securing funding for Northbound improvements.

THE PARTNERSHIP INCLUDES:

- Congress Member Ellen Tauscher
- State Senator Liz Figueroa
- Assembly Member John Dutra
- Alameda County Congestion Management Agency
- Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
- Contra Costa County Transportation Authority
- Contra Costa Council
- Alameda County Transportation Authority
- Tri-Valley Business Council
- Metropolitan Transportation Commission
- Silicon Valley Manufacturer's Group
- California Department of Transportation
- Bay Area Council
- Fremont Chamber of Commerce

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